

Name: Yeung Nga Yan

Major: Linguistics and Language Application

Department: Linguistics and translation (final year)

Before the one-month stay in Lyon, I aimed to improve my French competency and get to know about the culture there, and I can say that the goals were mostly achieved. The study program has been a very pleasant experience for me.

I joined the July course with two instructors: Luce and Antoine. I was in a group equivalent to level A2. I got the average of 15.95/20 in reading, writing, listening and speaking, which I am quite satisfied with. We only had to attend school on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. And on Mondays and Fridays, we only have morning sessions. In our classes, the instructors only speak French, even when I asked in English, they would reply in French. It was really tough in the first few days, but luckily I got used to it and my listening has improved a lot. We usually have discussions, play games and watch videos in class. Luce also played us songs during Thursday afternoon classes.

The learning atmosphere was relaxed and fun, and I have met a few very determined French learners who were over the age of 50, which encouraged me a lot and have become my role model. One of which is a Japanese lady that I still contact through emails. I think my daily life French improved mostly because of the conversations I had with her, because French became our only common language. Everyday we would talk about what we have done and use newly learnt words and tenses together, we basically exchanged knowledge and it really enriched my French vocabularies.

Other than offering classes, the school also planned excursions for us. We visited Perouges, Annecy and some other tourist spots in Lyon. On the day we visited Perouges, there was pouring rain and later even hail! A very nice restaurant owner invited us in to avoid drowning from the rainfall and I had the best hot cocoa there. It was always said that French people are cool and tend to look down

on foreigners but I do not feel that at all. Although the weather and the arrangements of the trips were not perfect, we had a lot of fun and got to know about the places better than looking online. It also provided us opportunities to speak French with the guide of instructors.

Moving on to my daily life in Lyon. I could not drink the tap water from my apartment, so I had to buy water from time to time, luckily the price of daily necessities were quite cheap there. Also, I could not adapt to the habit of eating salad and it was too expensive to get Chinese vegetables there, so I did not have much vegetables during the one month, but I tried quite a few new fruits from the Jean Mace market and manage to still eat healthily. There were also Asian supermarkets to buy some comfort food for when I was tired of pasta and bread. It really proved Hong Kong to be a food paradise. Since dining in the local restaurants was really expensive, I cooked most of the time and improve my cooking skills, which was an unexpected outcome from this trip.

I find that the people there are very polite and self-disciplined. Whenever I enter a store, I am instantly greeted; and when I leave, they always says “Bonne Journee”, which is very different from Hong Kong. Also, taking rests in “Place” and on the grass was so common and very interesting to me. There was one time when I went to the movies and I found that the popcorns were just hanging in there without counters selling them but there weren’t people stealing them or anything. I think the moral education there must be very good to enable them being this loose on security. I must also mention the way they dress there, everyone is very different and all look nice and presentable, unlike here in Hong Kong, most people are affected by the Korean culture and wear the same things. In general, I really like the politeness, laid-back lifestyle, discipline and individuality of Lyon.

To sum up, I really enjoyed the trip, most of the people I encountered were genuinely nice, and I did improve my French throughout the one month. I would definitely visit France again and continue to learn French.